

*Lyon*

November 20, 1958

Dear Francis:

I was depressed to get both your messages, your letter about the Columbia situation, and your postcard. A propos the latter, the only thing I can think of is some suspicion that your criticism of the handling of your Chinese students may have been a black mark against you in the State Dept. administration; it is still inconceivable to me that they should have passed over a candidate who combined your particular talent, experience and zeal! I wish I had known about the situation earlier, to have had a chance to add my own small weight— but it has been altogether too long since we've seen you and I would not even have been able to judge the quality of your interest. I hope that you will find Stanford a more convenient intersect of your well travelled paths.

Your remarks about Columbia were even more appalling! I had truncated my own letter (after the first heat of the writing) with the feeling that you must have gone a long way since my own days there, and that it was silly to meddle where I didn't really understand the facts. Aside from the frustrations the situation must afford you, the pity's the more for the many excellent students you have coming through who can have no wider conception of biology than they find in the department. It certainly was a revelation to me even to come to Wisconsin after my Ph.D. to see how much science there could be at a university — at Columbia and Yale I had the sense that science was a minor adjunct. And I can certainly agree, on reflection, that Columbia is not much more than restrained in the scope it does give its scientific departments. Perhaps this is one more factor that had turned my own sights towards the medical school, that (as I thought) science was its main business; but this is only to repeat what I said before.

Francis, I don't see any point pursuing this tack any further. I wouldn't mind getting embroiled even with your own colleagues, and even exposing myself to a valid criticism for meddling, even there were some purpose to it. From what you say there isn't— the trouble goes even deeper than I had thought, and there isn't much hope if neither the President nor the Department wants/ to change the status quo ante. So let's forget it— but if a more strategic occasion should ever develop, count me as a friend and supporter.

The 'small stipend' you've forgotten about was my bread and butter for about 4 months: not likely I'd forget it! I think you had a small grant from a drug company, probably in connection with leucine analogues. Yes these were exciting days!

Any chance of seeing you during a hasty flythrough en route to Sweden? Ed Tatum will have our up-to-date itinerary.

As ever

*Joshua Lederberg*  
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